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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY REVIEW

6 November 1958

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SITUATION IN IRAQ

Forces for and against union with the UAR are continuing to compete for influence in Baghdad, with Prime Minister Qasim tending to take a more pronounced antiunion position in the face of UAR-inspired agitation. The threat of open clashes on a large scale between the two sides may have been avoided by the arrest of former Deputy Premier Arif, who

returned unexpectedly to Baghdad from Vienna on 4 November. Arif, who earlier had asked and been refused official permission to drop his assignment as Iraqi ambassador to West Germany and return to Iraq, is scheduled for trial on charges of plotting against the state.

Arif's arrival followed by a day the departure of UAR

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Minister of Culture Husayn, whose visit was made the occasion for demonstrations by pro- and anti-UAR groups which in some cases were accompanied by violence. During the clashes, the police stood aside, and the intervention of the army appeared to favor the anti-UAR demonstrators, who were probably largely organized by Communist elements. UAR representatives called this situation to the attention of Qasim and pressed him for a statement of his attitude toward union with the UAR, but were put off.

These developments are leading UAR officials in Baghdad to the conclusion that the trend in Iraq is against any close association with Cairo, and they tend to attribute this to Communist influence. The UAR military attaché reported on 3 November, for example, that a group around Kamil Chadirchi, a leftist and one of Qasim's

principal civilian advisers, had decided to drop the slogan of "federal union" with the UAR and wished instead to work to detach Syria from the union with Egypt. The attaché predicted that "Communists" would soon begin to agitate in Syria toward this end.

The UAR has been supporting pro-UAR elements clandestinely, to the extent of promoting agitation among junior army officers who feel they are not adequately represented in the regime, but Cairo appears undecided how to handle the situation publicly. Cairo propaganda media have not commented on the news of Arif's arrest, and Nasir may wish to remain silent on this evidence of Iraqi resistance to the expansion of his influence. Baghdad, too, probably does not wish any open break, partly because it is still relying on the UAR's military strength for defense.